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SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

"HANDSHAKE BETWEEN OBAMA AND CHAVEZ, AND NORTH KOREA..."

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized (04/21): "A mood for dialogue is becoming ripe throughout the world in line with Obama's doctrine, 'we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.' The only exception, however, is North Korea. Since his inauguration, President Obama has sent a message of reconciliation to North Korea in several ways, only to face the North's long-range rocket launch and its expulsion of IAEA monitors and a State Department representative. North Korea may have intended to boost its standing on the U.S. list of diplomatic priorities and to increase its bargaining power, but this is clearly a miscalculation.

How can talks and negotiations occur if one side slaps the other in the face when the other extends his hand?"

"CUES FOR SOUTH KOREA FROM OBAMA'S SMART DIPLOMACY"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (04/21): "It is too early to say for certain that this new U.S. diplomatic strategy will produce long-term results. However, it is crystal clear that the Obama Administration's strategy of frankly admitting past U.S. mistakes while pursuing mutual prosperity and cooperation is giving the world hope for a new era, one based on dialogue rather than a monologue. The Korean Peninsula should not isolate itself in this new era of dialogue. North Korea must promptly come to the negotiation table. The ROK, for its part, must work to put the conditions to make that possible in place. We, too, need to consider adopting this kind of smart diplomacy."

STEPHENS